

**PHASE I OF THE
REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND CONSUMER SERVICES**

Increasing Public Knowledge of The Gypsy Moth

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**

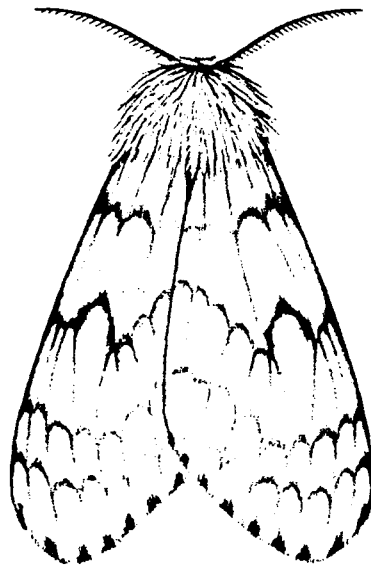


HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 2

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1990**

**Increasing Public Knowledge
Of The
GYPSY MOTH**

**A Study Authorized
by the 1989
Virginia General Assembly
Phase I
House Joint Resolution
Number 391**



REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INCREASING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE
GYPSY MOTHS AS OUTLINED IN HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 391

The 1989 session of the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution directing the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study means of increasing public knowledge of the gypsy moth through the development of a broad-based educational program. This resolution charges the Department to examine and report on the following:

1. Recommendations as to how the Commonwealth's budget process should be revised to reflect the biological data gathering techniques to facilitate the execution of the gypsy moth suppression program.
2. The need to identify problem gypsy moth populations in a timely manner to allow for more complete and effective gypsy moth programs.
3. Ways to encourage local government and citizen involvement in the gypsy moth suppression program.
4. The feasibility of using gypsy moth caterpillar counts in lieu of gypsy moth egg mass counts in preparing suppression programs.

Item number 1 above is designated as Phase I of this study and a report on it is due to the General Assembly by July 1, 1989. Items numbered 2, 3, and 4 above are designated as Phase II of the study and are to be presented to the Governor and the 1990 General Assembly.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INCREASING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE
GYPSY MOTH AS OUTLINED IN HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 391

PHASE I

POSSIBILITIES OF REVISING THE COMMONWEALTH'S BUDGET PROCESS
TO
FACILITATE EXECUTION OF THE GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM

Background:

Currently, localities conduct egg mass surveys for gypsy moth during the months of August, September, and October. Data from these surveys are compiled and plotted onto topographical maps to determine which areas in the county, city or town qualify for state suppression activities. Localities then submit proposals to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by November 15 in which they outline areas proposed for suppression activities, and the preferred strategy to be employed in each area.

From November 15 until approximately mid-January, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services evaluates each locality's proposal to ensure it meets the state's guidelines for cost sharing and other biological criteria. During late November and December, each locality conducts public scoping sessions where their gypsy moth committee explains to the general public its proposed plan of action for suppressing gypsy moth populations the following year. All input from these meetings are submitted to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by the locality and a

decision is made jointly as to whether changes are warranted in the proposals submitted.

In January, as a result of joint discussions, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services makes a final decision on local proposals and subsequently informs all localities of the decision. Bids are prepared by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for insecticides and biological controls, ground applications and applications by aircraft. Bids are received in March or early April with treatments beginning in late April or early May. Treatments are usually concluded by early June.

Assessments as to the effectiveness of the treatments take place in June and July. In August, the entire process is renewed with the initiation of egg mass surveys.

The Problem:

The basic problem is a gap between the state's budget making process and the time required for making predictions of treatment needs.

Budget preparations by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and other state agencies are started as much as two and one-half years in advance. If projections of funding needs for gypsy moth controls are incorrect, the shortfall (or surplus) can be enormous. As an example, when treating 150,000 acres in a given year, if a bid for the aerial applicator cost comes in at \$4.86 per acre instead of the projected cost of \$3.86 per acre, that one dollar difference on the bids received alone means a difference of \$150,000. The bid price for control agents can have a similar effect.

Since surveys for problem gypsy moth populations, on which the next year's suppression program is based, cannot take place until August-October, final plans for suppression activities cannot be completed until November or December. Having sufficient resources to fund 100% of all proposals depends on the needs as identified by the local government in late fall. However, the deadline for state agencies preparing and submitting budget addendums is mid-summer.

Conclusion:

The public and local governments need assurance that the fiscal resources for carrying out gypsy moth suppression programs in cooperation with localities will be available on an ongoing and timely basis. Otherwise, localities are in the position of not knowing whether the cost share funds will be available from the Commonwealth.

Alternatives To Correct the Funding Problems:

I. Do Nothing

Advantages:

1. The existing budget process would not need to be amended.

Disadvantages:

1. Localities would not know in a timely manner to what extent their proposal would be funded because of monetary limitations.

2. Budget amendments would be needed each year to fund 100% of all approved projects.
3. Because sufficient monies are not available, localities are not sure of the level of funds available from the Commonwealth and are not in a position to plan suppression programs. As a consequence, local governments will apply pressure upon legislators to ensure approval of budget amendments.

II. Use all appropriations in the current fiscal year and if appropriations are exceeded within the fiscal year, carry obligations over to the second fiscal year for payment.

Advantages:

1. All local programs will be funded in the fiscal year in which expenditures are made.

Disadvantages:

1. The General Assembly would have to identify and appropriate supplemental appropriations each year.
2. Finding monies to pay for a previous year's suppression program will prove to be difficult and politically unpalatable as other needs and priorities face the General Assembly each year.
3. Localities would not be able to finalize their suppression programs on a timely basis.
4. Since the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services would not be able to finalize its plan, localities would not know if their proposal was going to be approved.

5. Increased pressure would be exerted on legislators to help ensure approval of budget amendments.
6. This alternative does not resolve the problem of reappropriating monies between bienniums.

III. During the second year of the biennium, request the General Assembly to approve a budget amendment which allows the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to carry over any unspent general or non-general funds from the first year of the biennium to the second year of the biennium for use in the gypsy moth suppression program.

Example language in the second year of the biennium budget:

"The amount for Gypsy Moth Suppression shall include \$_____ the first year from the general fund and \$_____ from non-general funds for the implementation of the Cooperative gypsy moth suppression program. Any unexpended balance of these funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 19__ is hereby reappropriated."

Advantages:

1. This alternative would provide funding flexibility to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
2. This alternative would mesh the budget process with actual program needs as assessed from biological data.
3. This would provide some financial relief over a two year interval if unexpended funds remained from the first year.

4. If unexpended funds were carried over the second year it would allow the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to inform the localities earlier as to the status of their proposal.

Disadvantages:

1. This alternative is totally dependent upon unspent funds being available.
2. It does not provide for carryover of unspent funds between bienniums.

- IV. Amend the Virginia Pest Law to allow for the carry over of unexpended general and non-general funds between bienniums by creating a Gypsy Moth Cooperative Suppression Program Fund.

Suggested language:

"Establishment of a Gypsy Moth Cooperative Suppression Program Fund. A Cooperative Suppression Program Fund is hereby established as a special fund on the books of the State Comptroller, and all moneys credited to such fund are hereby appropriated for the purposes set forth in the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Gypsy Moth Cooperative Suppression Program Guidelines and shall be used exclusively for the administration and promulgation of the Cooperative Suppression Program. Moneys for such fund may be derived from appropriations from the general fund of the state treasury; grants of private or government money designated for specified activities pursuant to the Suppression Program; fees for

services rendered pursuant to the Suppression Program; payment for products, equipment, or material or any other thing supplied by the Commissioner; payment for educational publications, materials or supplies provided by the Commissioner, and grants, bequests and donations.

All funds collected for, appropriated or received by the Commissioner shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the Gypsy Moth Cooperative Suppression Fund. No part of such fund shall revert to the general fund of the state treasury."

Advantages:

1. This would provide long term financial flexibility and funding for the gypsy moth suppression program by allowing for the use of unexpended funds between bienniums/fiscal years.
2. This proposal would allow for better long term planning by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and localities on suppression strategies.
3. This option would provide localities more time for planning their proposals because they would know in advance financial resources available.

Disadvantages:

None identified.

V. Request that the Governor allow a deficit appropriation.

Advantages:

1. This alternative would provide funding on a timely basis to meet monetary shortfall for suppression activities.
2. Also, it would allow localities and VDACS to formulate strategies on gypsy moth suppression without fear of having some suppression programs disapproved.

Disadvantages:

1. If a reduction in state revenue occurs, no funds may be available.
2. This alternative might serve as a disincentive to some localities to prioritize their suppression activities.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix I - House Joint Resolution No. 391

LD7149511

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 391

Offered January 24, 1989

Requesting the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study means of increasing public knowledge of the gypsy moth.

Patrons—Mayer, Byrne, Marshall, Keating, Van Landingham, Dillard, Woods, Medico, Plum, Almand, Cunningham, R. K., Callahan, Harris, R. E., Stambaugh, Brickley, Parrish, Rollins, Rollison, Andrews and McDiarmid; Senators: Saslaw, Miller, K. G., Waddell, Calhoun, Gartlan, Miller, E. F., DuVal, Holland, E. M. and Colgan

Referred to the Committee on Agriculture

WHEREAS, the gypsy moth infestation in parts of Northern Virginia is of great concern to the area's citizens; and

WHEREAS, the gypsy moth has been a severe nuisance to citizens of Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the gypsy moth can cause severe environmental disruption where present in large numbers; and

WHEREAS, high gypsy moth populations can cause great economic losses to homeowners through dead trees and lowered property values; and

WHEREAS, the adverse effects of gypsy moths will be felt in all other parts of the Commonwealth if their populations spread; and

WHEREAS, governmental control efforts are needed to ensure the minimal use of pesticides and the promotion of environmentally safe control mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's biennial budget process requires infestation predictions of gypsy moths two years in advance, resulting in inaccurate predictions; and

WHEREAS, the national tree defoliation data shows the number of gypsy moths almost tripled in Virginia in the past year; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the Commonwealth expect and should receive only the most effective control efforts; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the Commonwealth wish to assist the government in the control of this pest; and

WHEREAS, it is easier to identify and count caterpillars rather than egg masses of the gypsy moth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is requested, with the cooperation of local governing bodies, local educational systems and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, to develop a broad-based educational program for citizens to raise the level of knowledge about the gypsy moth. As a part of this study, the Department should examine and report on, but not be limited to, such issues as the need to identify problem gypsy moth populations in a timely manner to allow for more complete and effective gypsy moth programs; ways to encourage local governments and citizen involvement in the gypsy moth suppression program; and the feasibility of using gypsy moth caterpillar counts in lieu of gypsy moth egg mass counts; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Department provide the General Assembly by July 1, 1989, with recommendations as to how the Commonwealth's budget process should be revised to reflect the biological data gathering techniques and to facilitate the execution of the gypsy moth suppression program.

The Department shall complete its work on increasing public awareness of all facets of the gypsy moth problem in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1990 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for processing legislative documents.

